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“Transmitted via email”

November 30, 2004

MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 300-5-14

SUBJECT: LTP – Technical Service Providers (TSP)

Purpose. To distribute and solicit comments on the draft TSP General Manual, TSP Manual, and TSP Handbook.

Expiration Date. March 30, 2005

**Action Required By: January 11, 2005**

Section 1242 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, (2002 Farm Bill) allows provisions for delivering technical assistance to a producer directly or through a payment for an approved third party. The legislation calls for establishing a system for approving individuals and entities to provide technical assistance and for establishing the amounts of and methods for payments for that assistance. The legislation also provides for entering into cooperative agreements, contribution agreements, or contracts with non-Federal entities to assist in providing the technical assistance necessary to develop and implement conservation programs.

National Bulletin 440-4-15, issued July 20, 2004, distributed the revised draft TSP Assistance policy for interim reference. Since that time, the National TSP Team received many comments toward finalizing TSP policy and procedures and has prepared three draft documents for review and comment. These three documents are:

1. TSP General Manual, which provides the concise policy statement concerning TSP assistance.
2. TSP Manual, which provides detailed policy (not appropriate for the General Manual).
3. TSP Handbook, which provides procedures in implementing the before-mentioned policies.

The following summary of major changes was reviewed at the national TSP training.

- All new TSPs will have their credentials verified prior to becoming certified. NRCS will have up to 60 days to review, interview and document that new TSPs meet all the qualifications and requirements contained on the TechReg site.

- When NRCS obtains TSP services through a “request for proposals” or other “agreements” the entity awarded the work is not required to be certified on TechReg. However, NRCS will clearly list the technical qualifications requirement to perform the services being acquired in the RFP or agreement. All TSP services procured by approved USDA program participants must first be certified on TechReg.
- TSP services can only be paid when there is a written agreement from NRCS in place prior to those services occurring.
- NRCS will not offer any financial incentive to producers that obtain TSP services.
- TSPs are liable and responsible for the work that they perform. Program participants are solely responsible for the TSPs that they hire. Participants are also responsible for any easements and permits required of the work to be performed. NRCS retains all program responsibilities, including the responsibility for NEPA.

The draft TSP documents are attached for review and comment. Please email comments to Jeff St.Ores, Water Quality Specialist, no later than Wednesday, January 11, 2005.

Ann English acting for

WILLIAM HUNT  
State Conservationist

[Attachment A – Draft \(TSP\) General Manual](#)

[Attachment B – Draft \(TSP\) Manual](#)

[Attachment C – Draft \(TSP\) Handbook](#)

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